

THE BURGH ANGEL

One True Vision

Maryhill Baths and Burgh Halls to Reopen In Gigantic Community Victory



Kenny McLachlan, late chairperson of **Maryhill Burgh Halls Trust**, had the last laugh from beyond the grave, when red faced council bosses agreed to re-open Maryhill's popular Burgh Halls and Swimming Baths.

A Council run swimming pool, fitness suite, and games hall will open 2008 – according to secret documents seen by the Burgh Angel. Building work is scheduled to start in 2006.

The main Burgh Hall is planned to re-open 2009 – weddings being the first order of business. The main dance hall holds 200-300 guests, and planning officials believe this will quickly become our areas

most sought after wedding venue, fetching lets of up to £400 per night.

Also planned are offices for local firms and projects, a café for local people with garden area, recording studio and rehearsal space, meeting rooms for use by local groups, and a child day care centre.

All this comes after 20 years of closure, when council bosses swore the halls and baths would never be re-opened for ordinary people to use. Private property developers were poised to turn the buildings into yuppie flats. But the local peoples campaign has triumphed in the end.

Maryhill was an independent Burgh until it became

part of the City Council in 1891, and the Burgh Halls – built 1878 – was the centre of Maryhill government.

Maryhill Burgh Halls Trust is now running again and welcomes new members – to join, pay £1/year to Maryhill Burgh Halls Trust, c/o Hunter Reid, Cube HA, 70 Glenfinnan Road Glasgow G20 8JX, Tel: 945 4726.

Kenny McLachlan, founder of Maryhill Burgh Trust is also famous for leading the victorious '80s teachers strike, as the President of the EIS. He was also a member of the Communist Party and volunteered for the Spanish Civil War, though was refused, being too young; before serving as a paratrooper during W.W.2.

New Social Centre for Woodside and Maryhill

Local people have opened the George's X Chalkboard as a space where people can talk about and get involved in improving our community.

The group behind it wanted to emphasize that the shop was a place that was open for everyone to use how they wanted, democratically. The shop is to function as a community centre for local people as well as a meeting space for local groups, such as tenants' associations.

"There's a lot of development that's going on at the moment, with luxury flats being built along the length of the canal and it's not necessarily something that people in this area should welcome. We've also seen local youth centres shut, community centres closed or forced to 'become profitable' and we've seen social housing in many places become run down and, in my area for example we've seen GHA budgetary underspends of over 50% when what's needed is a lot of investment in our homes and communities. I think what we're seeing is the opposite, and we want to talk about these issues because they're being ignored by the politicians, and they are affecting our everyday lives." said Nick,

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Got any ideas or do you just want to send us a letter? See the address on the back page..

New Social Centre for Woodside and Maryhill

...Continued from Page 1

a member of the group.

Moving on to discuss the aims of the group, Nick talked about "want[ing] to provide a forum for discussing these issues as well as providing services that people in the area would like to see that are generally neglected." The group also emphasized the need for getting people to cooperate to take on issues like GHA budgetary underspending in the areas surrounding the Chalkboard and of "Council cutbacks" saying that, unless we work together, "we're not going to see any real changes for the better in our area."

The group isn't just about issues. they also aim to have fun too. "We're keen to see a St. George's Cross summer party and we'd like to get people in the area together to organise the

kind of community events that we used have much more of," Nick said.

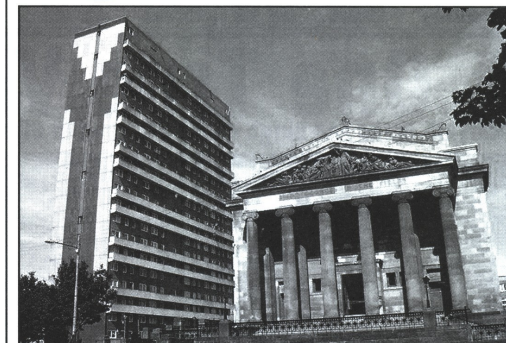
The George's X Chalkboard is independent of the council, GHA and all political parties, and the shop is staffed on a volunteer basis. It took several years to come to fruition but group members are very happy to have finally brought the project together

The Chalkboard does not receive funding from the GHA or other authorities.

To find out more about the Chalkboard or to read the latest news why not give the shop a ring on 0141 332 2902, take a look at our website - www.chalkboard.org.uk, or simply drop by during our opening hours, 2 - 7pm, 7 days. Tea and coffee are provided!



High Flat Fiasco



Reporters for the Burgh Angel have learned that GHA attempted to prevent tenants in the Cedar Court flats from organizing, since the local tenants association there was set up.

"They told us we had to accept their constitution, we had to have their officials present in all our meetings and that we had to accept the boundaries they drew for us," the association's secretary told the Angel.

Initially GHA prevented tenants at Cedar from accessing their own meeting room and tenants facilities. "We had to hold our early meetings almost in secret, because whenever we tried to organize openly the GHA would send representatives along, or would take down all our publicity. We are not allowed to use our own facilities to say anything critical of the GHA.

Initially we were forced to meet in drying rooms because there was nowhere else we could meet."

In many ways what upset tenants most was GHA's lack of openness. Tenants in block 65 of Cedar Court had one of their lifts off and broken for over 3 months before anyone living in the area received any explanation from GHA.

"We get these occasional letters. The latest one from our housing officer Michelle Carrigan told us we had to clean our closes or she'll report us to such and such authority. I mean, yes, people not cleaning the closes is a problem, and it's kind of anti-social, but at the same time so is leaving a lift off for four and half months and leaving elderly people literally housebound and not bothering to mention to tenants why this is going on."

In the beginning GHA employees attended meetings held by the association and disrupted the discussions of the fledgling association. The Burgh Angel understands that GHA at Queens Cross held meetings on what to do about the new association. When asked whether or not she thought this was true, a

Continued on Page 3...

Burgh Shorts: Maryhill Matters

Guthrie Hutton, author of Maryhill Matters and local expert on the history of our community, gave a talk on his specialist subject of the history of Maryhill and the Forth and Clyde Canal at Community Central Hall.

The event took place on Thursday the 10th November and was in aid of Maryhill Community Central Hall, Glasgow's busiest community centre. Wine, soft drinks and savouries were served, and after a talk lasting about 45 minutes Guthrie answered questions before signing copies of his book Bygone Maryhill, published this year.

Tenants Fight for Respect

Continued from Page 2

member of the association interviewed by the Angel responded, "Yes I think that's what happened. You see we held a few meetings and we discovered the GHA lied to various tenants interested in starting an association for the area, that they had been the only tenants to express an interest. When we started to organize outside of their control they called some of us to 'the first meeting of the tenants association.'"

From meetings with the Tenants Association the Angel understands that there is a strong desire for the association to maintain its independence and to bring in more people and fight for tenants in the area. "We're gonnae keep fighting this, until we get what we want. We want our basic rights, our facilities, a much greater say in what goes on in the area, places for our children to play. We want to be kept informed on what GHA are actually doing, and we want a bit of resect. We're not morons living in this area."

Cedar Tenants Association has asked the Angel to let anyone interested in finding out more about the tenants association, or get in contact with them to write to them at:
George's X Chalkboard, 34 Clarendon Place, G20 7PZ
E-mail: cedar-tenants-association@hotmail.com

You can also keep up to date on what's going on with Cedar Tenants Association by looking at their website:
www.cedar-tenants-association.blogspot.com/

The Men of Lyon Street

There's a little street in Glasgow
At the top of Garscube Road,
That has bred some noble soldiers,
Worthy of a King's abode.
The street is not a long one,
Just about six hundred feet,
But it's turned out a man per foot -
The Men of Lyon Street.

Some of them were in the Seaforths,
In the Sweeps, or H.L.I.,
The Argylls and gallant Gordons :
In a foreign grave they lie.
Some are in the Forty Second,
Or the Borderers, so neat,
Camerons, Fusiliers, all fighters,
The Men of Lyon Street.

Some are serving in the Navy,
Royal Scots and R.F.A.;
Some are in the Royal Irish
Pushing Fritz right out the way.
One at least has gained the honour
Of commissioned rank complete,
And they won a score of medals, have
The Men of Lyon Street.

They have surely made a record,
Even in this record war,
And we ought to sound their praises
Over all the world afar.
They have nobly done their duty,
Those men who can't be beat,
Who are worthy of all honour,
The Men of Lyon Street.

R.F. Morrison

Lyon street produced a large number of soldiers who battled prominently during the Great War. While looking back today we would be very naive not to accept that the horrors of the trenches and battlefields of the continent were a senseless waste of human life and that "Fritz" probably had a lot more in common with the men on "our" side of the trenches it was a very momentous period in our community's history. A plaque was erected by local people in order to commemorate those men of Lyon street, which for their bravery earned more medals than any other single street in

the British empire, as well as suffering more casualties.

Recently efforts have been underway to recover this plaque, which was entirely constructed by locals when these men's respective regiments failed to recognize the sacrifice that had been made by this one street in Woodside. Since the original has not been found after years of searching a new plaque based on the original, has been commissioned and as we go to press a ceremony has taken place at st. Joseph's School to officially unveil it to the community.

Your Letters Here

If there is something that you want to see other people reading about, that concerns this community, write to The Burgh Angel about it:

The Burgh Angel

C/O George's X Chalkboard

34 Clarendon Place

Near St. George's Cross

GLASGOW

G20 7PZ

Email: burgh.angel@gmail.com

Dear Burgh Angel,

Regard

to the

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Hopefully

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Woodoku

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The answer to this sudoku puzzle will be in the next issue of The Burgh Angel.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU WANT FOR OUR AREA.

We are local people like yourselves – but fed up with the lack of progress.

We have started this newsletter to push for change.

We receive no funding from Glasgow City Council or other public bodies.

Let us know what you want us to write about. Perhaps you want to write about something?

Let us know what is happening in your area.

- Is anti social behaviour dealt with properly?
- Are there enough facilities for local youth?
- Is Glasgow Housing Association delivering?
- Is Queens Cross Housing Association delivering?
- Should this paper be called the Burgh Angel, or something else?

All communication will be treated in strictest confidence. – if you are ok with being identified by name please say so, otherwise we will keep everything absolutely confidential.

We are not afraid to print the truth, no matter who we offend.

This is your local newsletter – so let us know what you think.

Contact us through: St. George's Cross Chalkboard, 34 Clarendon Place, G20 7PZ, Tel: 332 2902.

THE BURGH ANGEL

Parents battle to save local schools

The net closes around twenty-eight of Glasgow's primary schools



Glasgow City Council prompted a public backlash by announcing the closure of 28 primary schools and many nurseries.

The announced closures follow a public consultation exercise, in which the planned closure of many local primary schools was absolutely slated by parents and teachers across the city.

Due to the strength of feeling, parents in threatened schools had already begun campaigning even before the decision was taken. The west of the city saw campaigners stage a 'unity march', in which parents and concerned residents from Yorkhill, Kelvinhaugh, Partick and the West End come together to oppose plans for closures of local schools to build a 'super-school' in their area with mem-

bers of the Carnwadric campaign group, to demand that their primary schools stay open, and that the council use the opportunity provided by the city's lower class sizes to improve children's education, rather than as a chance to close schools and bring the city's primary class sizes to the legal limit.

The council refused to listen and has pushed ahead with their plans. As a result mothers staged sit-ins in Carnwadric Primary, and elsewhere. These have culminated in city-wide sit-ins, one school in Pollok being occupied by angry parents for a full three days. There have also been marches through Carnwadric and Easterhouse, and angry parents and local residents from across the city, from Carnwadric to the Maryhill Burgh, have come together in

rallies outside the Council buildings at George Square in ongoing protests against the moves.

In our own Burgh the Council plans to axe Ruchill, Wester Common, Our Lady of Assumption and St Cuthbert's primary schools to build a multiplex superschool. This is to be built on Ruchill park and will lead to the closure of the football pitches there. The move will see children having to travel greater distances and lead to greatly enlarged class sizes for the Burgh's kids. Also planned for closure is Maryhill primary school - the pupils to be transferred to Parkview Primary School.

The Burgh Angel attended some of the protests against the Council's moves to find out what was going on and we

Continued on Page 2...

Competition GHA underspends

by £1 million

A recent report from the Glasgow Housing Association issued to tenants, notes that the GHA "spent £856,497 of a total budget of £1,788,081", in the Woodside area (South Maryhill LHO). They claim the massive underspend of £931,584 was "due to priorities elsewhere in the city".

The Burgh Angel would like to know what you think that money should have been spent on.

In order to highlight the issue we are holding a competition.

The winner of the competition will be given a prize and the best answers will be sent anonymously to local GHA boss Stephen McAvoy, to remind him of his duty to tenants.

The GHA underspend should be spent on: Tick

- ☐ Repairs
- ☐ New Kitchens
- ☐ New Bathrooms
- ☐ Playgrounds
- ☐ Toy Library
- ☐ Youth Centre

Other:

Name:

Address:

Please return this to:

George's X Chalkboard
34 Clarendon Place
G20 7PZ

Campaign**Local schools struggle**

...Continued from Page 1

asked parents what they felt about the moves and why they had to take action. Don, a parent and Glasgow Housing Association tenant from Yorkhill told us, "My son (is) supposed to be going to Kelvinhaugh Primary. I live in Yorkhill and Kelvinhaugh's just down the hill from us. And now with them talking about closing this, everything that's going up in our neighbourhood is luxury flats. It's almost like we're kind of being driven out."

Don went on to say, "They're not taking seriously how it's affecting people and they don't seem interested at all... I asked them about bullying, because I'm concerned about that, and the guy from the Council, he said they don't anticipate any problem with bullying. They have to consider it could be a problem if they stuff that many kids in the one place. With all these buildings that are going up normal people are getting priced out of the neighbourhood, and now they're talking about closing our community centre as well."

We also spoke to a mother, whose kids attends St. Edmund's School in Pollok.

"They keep going on about how our school has a 20% fall in the school roll - I mean it's 80 percent full! And what they're planning on doing is transferring our kids to St Marnock's school where the teachers have said they don't want it. I mean they're not going to be welcome there. Our school achieves really good results, and it's in Pollok. They're always saying that schools in deprived areas do badly, but ours is one of the best schools in the city, and now they're gonnae shut it! This is a disgrace, and they say we live in a democracy!"

Hamiltonhill says,**"No more!"****Meeting of residents vows to end downward slide***The vile truth exposed - a broken toilet pipe leaks into a garden*

Residents of Hamiltonhill met last week to discuss the problems facing their area.

The packed public meeting, held at an old shop run by the local Family Learning Centre, on Ellesmere Street, was attended by almost 70 local people, including members of the Board of Queen's Cross Housing Association, who administer Hamiltonhill on the GHA's behalf. Many attendees were unable to get into the meeting room due to the overwhelming attendance.

The meeting discussed problems like rotting floorboards and masonry, the presence of heroin addicts on Hamiltonhill and the threat of demolition. Many residents are unhappy about the way they are being treated. As a result an action group has emerged to organise another meeting and to think about ways to start addressing the problems of Hamiltonhill.

Hamiltonhill has ageing accommodation, much of which has seen little attention in recent years. Rumours are constantly circulating about

the possibility of the demolition of the central section of the old Council estate, and even the whole area.

Graffiti is everywhere, and many streets have rusting fences and broken windows. One local woman even knew two people whose bathroom ceilings had caved in, just in the past two months.

Homeowners who bought their Council houses under the right-to-buy scheme are also being charged as much as £9000 for re-cladding work, by the Glasgow Housing Association, who undertake repairs for ex-tenants. Some of these people are among the poorest in Britain, in an area where unemployment runs at around 40%.

Whatever the difficulties faced by the tenants and homeowners of Hamiltonhill, there was a sense of satisfaction by the end of the meeting, with many residents offering to contact the authorities on behalf of everyone and a solid campaign is in the offing.

Culture**Lions take over****George's Cross**

In order to coincide with the recent Chinese New Year celebrations, the enterprising Raymond Man's Kung Fu school, run out of an alternative medicine shop on Clarendon Place, organised a Lion Dance with Paisley Kung Fu school in the street outside.

The event saw the performers don lion costumes and play a variety of traditional drums, as two lions danced convincingly. The event saw dozens of local residents and shopkeepers look on in delight and amazement as a black Lion cavorted, twirled and interacted with its partner.

At one stage passers-by were enthralled when the black lion began angrily munching on a pile of food left for it, before spitting out the remains high into the air, while the Kung Fu band played a dramatic chorus of drumming.

The event was a welcome evening's entertainment for all and will be remembered as a refreshing, pleasing and creative community event. It is these kind of activities that make our communities brighter places to live, and provide fond memories for our children to look back on in years to come.

*Lion dance is a popular New Year tradition in China.*

Campaign



The pitches in Maryhill have come under attack before

Footie pitches under building threat

In 2014, Glasgow intends to host the Commonwealth Games.

In 2007 and 2008, Glasgow intends to prepare for that great event by selling off football pitches at Maryhill Road, North Kelvinside; Acre Road, Summerston; and Cowlares Park, Springburn. Pitches next to recently closed primary schools are also planned to be built over.

Normally cities which host international sporting events squander large sums of money on the razzmatazz - but at least leave their citizens with decent sports facilities as a leftover.

Sydney's open-to-the-public Olympic swimming pool is world famous for producing swimming champions from out of the Australian working class.

But Glasgow plans to buck the trend by being the first city to waste the money but at the same time cut public sports facilities.

The plans are that a few sports facilities will get a much needed facelift - but many more will be sold off for private housing.

The pitches at Queen Margaret Drive / Maryhill Road are fully booked. They are among the few around here with floodlights and changing rooms. But Queens Cross Housing Association has just lodged a planning application to build 100 flats - mostly expensive flats for private sale - on the site where North Kelvinside Secondary School stood.

Glasgow City Council has just ruled those pitches 'surplus to requirements'. What are young people meant to do, if they can't play football? The Council puts money from land sales ahead of youth concerns.

With a strong local campaign, a public local planning inquiry can be won. Government rules are that pitches should not be closed without creation of new 'like for like' provision.

The Clouston Street pitches are a great success story for the local community. Ten years ago the Council tried to sell off the pitches for private housing. A huge local campaign forced a public local (planning) inquiry. The inquiry ruled that the

Clouston Street pitches must be kept forever.

But the victory was not that easy. Glasgow City Council were furious they had lost. They refused to re-open the changing rooms or even maintain the pitches. The pitches became covered with used needles and rubbish.

The City Council hoped to sicken people so much that they would agree to let the site be sold for housing. But local people would not give in. Now they have finally won. £1.25M is to be spent refurbishing Clouston Street Pitches.

20% of the site will be lost to private housing - through (who else!) Queens Cross Housing Association. The rest will become a new 'Compendium Park', with:

- 7-a-side football/hockey pitch
- three multi-courts
- team based changing accommodation
- floodlights
- cricket/golf nets
- jogging track
- external fitness area/gym
- reflection zone for tai chi, yoga
- climbing wall
- 100m sprint track

Rights

Cedar Tenants'

Association update

In the last edition of The Burgh Angel, we reported that Cedar Tenants' Association - the tenant group which is working for and with residents in the Cedar Court area of Woodside - had been in wrangles with their landlord, the Glasgow Housing Association (GHA), over access to facilities and the level of investment they had been receiving from the GHA.

We can now report that in the past few weeks the Cedar group has held a meeting with the local boss of the GHA, Community Housing Manager at Queens Cross LHO. Stephen McAvoy, and has various agreements that the GHA will now meet with residents' groups in the area, and that some basic repairs will now be carried out. The Cedar Tenants' Association has told the Angel that it vows to fight on until its objective of a strong and vibrant community, free from neglect (such as on the front page), has been met.

On 16th March, over 50 residents met at Woodside Hall, to talk about local problems and the need for residents' groups.

Planning

Upmarket housing development given green light

Councillors have voted to go ahead with plans to build controversial New Dundas Wharf, a 17 storey tower block. The luxury apartment complex due to be situated at Spiers Wharf, by the canal is to cost £12 million which will be entirely funded from public money.

"Glasgow City Council alongside ISIS (a British Waterways subsidiary) is the developer - it's an absolute joke and a complete conflict of interest. We're going to fight this to the last!" - a local resident.

Games

Woodoku

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The answer to this sudoku puzzle will be in the next issue of the Burgh Angel. For now, here is the solution to Woodoku in the last edition.

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8	9	5	7	4	1	3	6	2
6	7	8	9	3	5	4	2	1
2	5	1	8	7	4	6	9	3
9	3	4	1	6	2	5	7	8

"This is the city and I am one of its citizens. Whatever interests the rest interests me, politics, wars, markets, newspapers, schools, the mayor and councils, banks, tariffs, steamships, factories, stocks, stores, real estate and personal estate." *Walt Whitman*

www.citystrolls.com

About this paper

The Burgh Angel is run by local residents on a voluntary basis. We have no connection to the City Council or the Housing.

We will print what we believe to be the truth and are not afraid to offend if the truth needs to be told.

We would also welcome any comments or ideas you might have. When contacting us, please tell us whether or not you want your name published in the Burgh Angel - we will not identify you without your permission.

Email: theburghangel@gmail.com

Post:

The Burgh Angel
C/O George's X Chalkboard
Woodside, Glasgow, G20 7PZ

BURGH SHORTS

Hamiltonhill social centre remembered



It was quite a good thing for all the kids in the area. You had arts and crafts, you had all the different classes all the dancing for all the kids and that. Like on a Monday/ Friday nights, and as time went on it was just like a Monday. it was a great wee thing.

It was always somewhere that the kids always went to. That was the main place you know. Sometimes they maybe

went up to Possilpark or up to Milton for certain things, but now it was for kids, it was for adults. People came fae all over. A lot of people came in their cars and aw that because there was aikido and there was different classes going on.

But it was a place that all the kids really did like. Even the old buddies all missed it for their wee groups and different things like that.

Historic community butcher to close

As I interviewed the local butcher for the Angel I didn't have a list of set questions to ask him. However sometimes the spontaneous chat reveals it's own gems.

Talking to his customers in general I was amazed at the area the shop serves, with customers from the top of Maryhill and throughout Possil. I should say here we are talking about an established business.

The present owner has been in business in Maryhill for 25 years, and his father before him was a butcher for 50 years. As we spoke a woman in her 30s was being served at the counter. Not only had she shopped there for years, her mother did and her grannie. Not only that she stayed in Clydebank, travelling in once a week for her supplies.

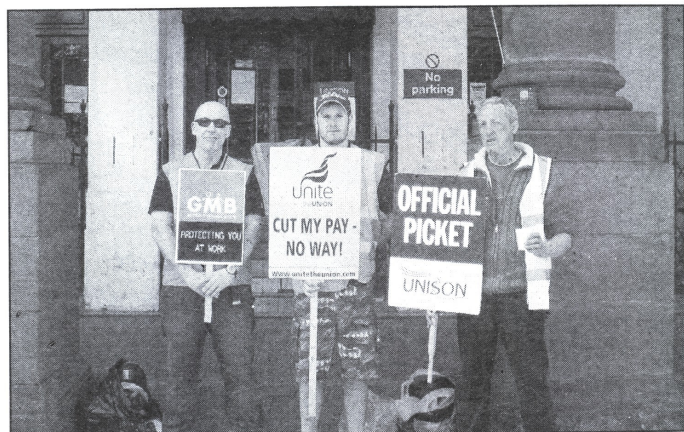
I only talked to a few peo-

ple on my visit to the butchers, but I came away with the sound of community ringing in my ears. It is so important not to lose the links with this type of community shopping. For like the local post office, it is not just a place to go for your shopping. It is a place where people know where you are and are concerned if you don't show up especially if you happen to be a bit frail. We only keep local businesses if we use them and we get much more for our money than a sterile shopping mall.

It was only later that I learned of the plans to open a betting shop on the street. There seems to be something wrong here, that this community hub should close to make way for yet another bookies, when there's one already on the street. I was pleased then to discover that local residents had lodged a petition against it.

THE BURGH ANGEL

Strikers combat cultural vandals



Strikers show their colours outside the offices of Culture & Sport Glasgow.

Anger against Culture & Sport Glasgow's (CSG) intended £3.4m cuts to community leisure services and staff has led to public petitions in support of the strike action by Unison, Unite, GMB and Bectu members opposing these destructive cuts.

In May, a signed petition was handed to Glasgow City Council and CSG when Woodside Leisure Centre's new timetable revealed that staff were to be laid off and classes cut back, many of which are continuously fully booked.

CSG's website claims they want "to enhance the health and

wellbeing of people who live, work and visit the City" as well as increase the volume of Glasgow public using leisure facilities. Considering the well documented health issues of Glasgow and the rising levels of obesity throughout the UK, it makes no sense to close a resource which is both being used and is needed.

A CSG employee said:

"There has been no discussion in terms of terms and conditions in the public forum and Culture & Sport have gone back on any promises to expand these discussions.

CSG are also unwilling to compromise and if things go on as they are then employees could face a loss of 10% of their take home pay as well as a pay freeze for the next three years.

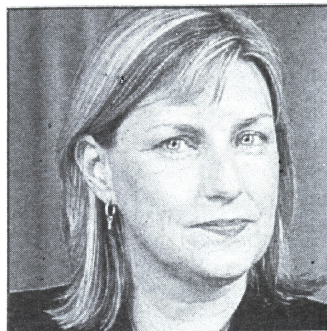
If money has been wasted and they're looking for ways to save money then this isn't good management: it's a knee jerk reaction and it's not the strikers who have misspent the money either.

The people who will suffer in the long term are those who are most vulnerable and those who can't afford to join private health clubs."

To protest against the cuts to services and staff contact Chief Executive of Culture & Sport, Bridget McConnel (pictured below), on:

Phone: 0141 287 4350

Email: info@csglasgow.org



This woman compared the work of Robert Owen and New Lanark to Silverburn Shopping Centre in a talk called "Culture and Sport a matter of life and death" at New Lanark



Locals commemorate the anniversary of the closure of Wyndford and St Gregory's primary schools last year.

Wyndford still united

On the eve of the May 2010 UK parliamentary elections, local parents and residents from the Wyndford held a march through the estate and onto Maryhill Road to protest outside the Labour Party election headquarters for Glasgow North.

The protest was a reminder of Glasgow City Council's decision to close the Wyndford and St Gregory's primary schools last year (as part of 25 closures across the city).

Local residents were aware of the fact that any campaign needs to be at the very least a visible presence and decided to coincide the protest with the elections for a greater impact, not to mention the anniversary of the occupations of the schools, in April and June 2009.

Questions

The protest and the election raise important questions about

participation in our communities – do we rely on the ballot box and a 'representative' democracy to solve our problems or are genuine community-led initiatives a legitimate and realistic way forward?

Following the election, the 'first past the post' voting system has once again brought up the question of 'alternative voting' – something the Westminster coalition has promised a referendum over. With only one Conservative seat won in the whole country, it is the same old story in Scotland and shows the current system is ludicrous and outdated.

But what difference would we feel locally if, say, Katy Gordon (Lib-Dem) or Patrick Grady (SNP) had won this seat? Both of these MPs opposed the closure of our local schools, as did the successful candidate, Labour's Ann McKechin, whose office local schools protesters marched to. The

key here is that as MPs and not councillors, these politicians enjoyed the safety of not being complicit in council decisions – but who is to say they would not have behaved the same in an environment run similarly to that of the crony-ridden Glasgow City Council?

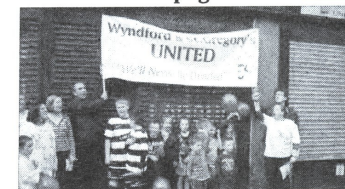
The political choices we are faced with today's – the parties which can realistically gain power in government or councils – are so narrow and dominated by similar agendas it is no wonder so many of the population feel alienated from the whole process. The election becomes a mere 'event', no different than X-Factor, instead of an actual process impacting upon our daily lives.

People Power – local struggles within the community

Despite all this doom and gloom, Glasgow is not without precedent when it comes to popular struggle: from the 'Red Clydeside' era (including the female-dominated rent strikes of 1915) through to the work-ins of the Upper Clyde shipbuilders in the 70s and the anti-poll tax actions of the 80s and 90s.

In recent times we have seen residents' groups join with community activists and unions in striking against Glasgow Housing Association's plans to remove

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Wyndford and local area continues fight

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concierge staff from tower blocks. This struggle in 2005 resulted in victory after GHA backed down on their initial plans.

Since October 2008 local residents have formed 'North Kelvin Meadow Campaign' and turned disused playing fields into a multi-use area with allotments and an orchard. Much of this has combined DIY community work with clever tactics like installing bat boxes in the meadow. Bats are a known protected species making it very difficult for the land to be redeveloped.

More recently, we have last year's schools closure campaigns. Despite defeat for local parents and kids, the campaign proved very positive. Through their occupation of the schools, to savvy promotion and management of local and national media, the campaigners were able to win the support of the city. This showed in the local solidarity given from shops, hair salons and even Partick Thistle FC.

The fight can be said to have influenced two great achievements for locals: the forming of a Wyndford and District Community Council and the renovation of St Gregory's school building as a new family centre.

Many physical improvements in our own areas have been at the hands of local residents and activists. For all their talk on those election leaflets, how many of the local MPs can say they have done as much?



Woodside makes garden in ruins of tenement

The Woodside area of Glasgow is witnessing community land reclamation. A local group of activists have taken over a piece of derelict ground on the site of a collapsed tenement and set about transforming it into a community garden.

The plot of land on West Princes Street is set to become a focal point for the local community. Plans for the land are already taking shape and the area has seen huge progress in the short time since work began.

The transformation has not happened by itself however as many people from the surrounding area have participated in the cutting down of bushes, digging up of trees and removal of rubble. The garden has seen contributions from old and young, people with expertise and people with none. Local students, workers, pensioners and unemployed have all volunteered their time to the project.

The work has been taking place on a Saturday from about eleven until four including a lunch-break. The break usually consists of a sit down in the garden to share some food. This is when a lot of the chit-chat takes place, which is a perfect way of getting to meet new folk in the community.

There have been meetings in the local area to discuss plans for the future development of the garden and how to maximise participation from the community. Plans for the garden include the building of a children's area, the growing of food such as radishes as well as continuing to involve the local community in the developing of the plot.

So if you want to get involved meet new people and learn new skills as well as contribute to the improvement of the local environment then you can e-mail growglasgow@yahoo.com to contact the organisers.

Firstgroup comes first for private subsidy

Using Glasgow's bus network pretty much means you have to use Firstbus plc. Almost 98% of Glasgow commuters have to use the one private bus company or a monopoly as you can call it. Firstbus receives subsidies from the government to run the service.

Some people will remember that before Firstbus ran Glasgow's buses, there was Strathclyde Passenger Transport Executive, with big yellow and green buses.

Deregulation (or privatisation) of UK bus services, opened up to the market to other companies. In

1986 Council-owned Strathclyde Buses was born and had to stand on its own two feet. In 1998 Firstgroup bought up Strathclyde Buses and the monopoly began.

Should we be blaming Firstbus plc for Glasgow's poor bus services? Yes, but they are not the only ones to blame - Firstbus plc is like any other profit-making company: they have to make as much money as they can - it's the system. Before Glasgow Firstbus, the decision to privatise was taken by politicians and it has not favoured for the people of Glasgow.

We need a service that is run for us, not for profit. We need a say where the buses go in Glasgow and not cutting areas off at night.



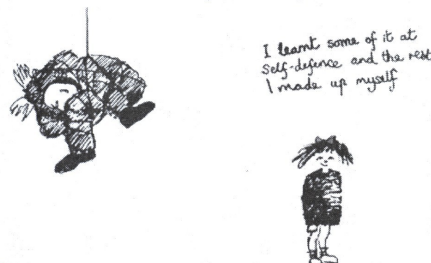
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Wise Women Glasgow provide FREE
Personal Safety Courses for Women

These courses are open to all women of all ages, fitness levels + abilities

- ★ Learn how to identify, avoid + escape potentially dangerous situations
- ★ Learn how to use simple techniques + shock tactics to improve your personal safety
- ★ Take part in discussions + exercises designed to help improve your confidence + self esteem.

Have some fun ... go on ... give it a go!!!



Venue: North West Women's Centre
17 – 33 Shawpark Street
Maryhill, G20 9DA

Dates: Every Wednesday 18th August – 27th October 2010
Times: 12.30pm – 2.30pm

Crèche available but must be booked in advance.

To register for the course and book the crèche contact:
Joanne @ Wise Women on 0141 550 7557
Email: joanne@wisewomen.org.uk

The Burgh Angel Contact Details

The Burgh Angel can be contacted as follows. If you are letting us know about your views, or some news you think we should report, please tell us whether or not we can publish your name.

Write to: The Burgh Angel
1/2 189b Maryhill Road,
Glasgow, G20 7XJ

Email: theburghangel@gmail.com

Web:
www.burghangel.org.uk

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